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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MLS, INL AND S/CT
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SUBJECT: THAILAND-WASHINGTON STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM ON
SECURITY ISSUES

1. Summary. The State Partnership Program (SPP) between the Washington State National Guard and the Royal Thai Armed Forces has evolved from humble beginnings addressing "niche" disaster response/consequence management areas to become an invaluable Embassy tool allowing us to advance objectives that have traditionally been outside normal funding mechanisms. Under the leadership of Major General Timothy Lowenberg, the Washington National Guard's Thailand SPP has enabled the Embassy to link experts at U.S. federal, state, and local agencies with Thai counterparts to further initiatives that are increasing Thailand's port security, improving their crisis management capabilities, establishing their first Air Marshal program, and developing their WMD rapid response system. The SPP is a relative newcomer to PACOM, having been first introduced in EUCOM and SOUTHCOM. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau hopes that PACOM SPP funding support may at some point increase to levels commensurate with other regions. While SPP funding priorities are purely a DOD/PACOM issue, Post suggests that the SPP program in Thailand is clearly an effective model for addressing complex international and interagency post-9/11 issues and offers this overview in the hopes that our experience may be of use to others in the region. End Summary.

BORN ON 9-11

2. The Thai delegation sent to the United States to shape the future of the SPP was in Crystal City on September 11, 2001. Delegates were evacuated from their meeting room after UA Flight 77 hit the Pentagon. Subsequently, it was quickly agreed that the Thailand SPP with Washington State would focus on improving Thailand's emergency response capabilities and assisting Thailand to deter acts of terror and to respond to natural disasters.

3. Washington State is ideally suited as a partner with Thailand. Possessing one of the most advanced emergency response capabilities of any state, with a world class air and seaport and being a major source of U.S. exports to Asia, Washington is also home to key U.S. military units who train regularly in Thailand. The Washington State Military Department also participates in the state's Emergency Management Council and its Committee on Terrorism. The U.S. and Thai SPP directors decided to draw on Washington State's strengths and focus on several key concerns: port security, creating an air marshal system in Thailand, and helping to create a national crisis management center.

THE PORT SECURITY INITIATIVE

4. Thai officials sought U.S. assistance to improve security at their Laem Chabang port facility. U.S. experts saw this as an opportunity to further U.S. priorities including the Container Security Initiative, the Proliferation Security Initiative, and the Regional Maritime Security Initiative. In addition, given Laem Chabang's capacity to support large USN ships visiting Thailand -- including U.S. aircraft carriers -- making sure the port was secure would enhance our force protection capabilities. Since 2004, the SPP sponsored numerous planning sessions, seminars, and exercises in Thailand and Washington State, with a wide array of Thai and U.S. agencies, (including DHS, ICE, TSA, and the Coast Guard) focused on port security. In many cases, the SPP events were the only opportunity the Thai counterpart agencies ever had to interact as a team, and they were for the first time able to practice interagency port security preparation and response for realistic security challenges.

THE AIR MARSHALL INITIATIVE

5. Until the SPP stepped in to assist, Thailand did not have an air marshal program. In 2004, the RTG designated the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) as executive agent to establish an air marshal training program that could be approved by U.S. Homeland Security. Beginning in August 2004, SPP has funded and supported planning execution of several U.S. and Thai events supporting this initiative. In 2006, SPP helped establish an aircraft shoot house in Bangkok to provide Thailand a facility in which live-fire anti-hijacking

training in realistic mock-ups of commercial aircraft could be conducted. This model facility will be a valuable training tool not only for new Thai Air Marshals, but also for law enforcement officials throughout the region.

16. This facility is a physical embodiment of the creative interagency cooperation necessary to meet new post-9/11 requirements. The overall coordination effort was led by JUSMAGTHAI, the building construction was overseen by the U.S. Navy's ROICC office, and it was funded by the DOD Force Protection Detachment. The initial Thai Air Marshall cadre training was coordinated by the TSA, funded by Thai Airways and SPP, and conducted by U.S. Federal Air Marshals. Follow-on training will be done at the INL-funded International Law Enforcement Academy facilities. The air marshal program is truly a U.S./Thai anti-hijacking interagency success story.

NATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT CENTER INITIATIVE

17. SPP funded U.S. experts to come to Thailand to explain how Washington State officials established its interagency crisis management system. These exchanges helped the Thai National Security Council develop a nation-wide one phone number alert system similar to the E911 system used in the United States and to simplify emergency response measures among Thai fire, police and other agencies. Thailand's first "555" call center will cover the separatist-conflict-affected areas of Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani in southern Thailand.

CONCLUSION -- THIS WORKS

18. Our Embassies throughout Asia are looking for creative ways to bring experts from various U.S. agencies together with host country counterparts to address today's security challenges. Our experience with the SPP with Washington State has been extremely positive and has fostered greater U.S. and Thai interagency cooperation. This relationship meshes well with our ongoing efforts funded by DOD, the State Department, DHS and DOJ to combat terrorism, secure commerce and promote interoperability. In a time where our resources are stretched thinly and we are looking for ways to maximize the impact of U.S. programs, the SPP is very attractive. It is our hope that DOD, PACOM, Washington State and the National Guard Bureau will continue to support the program here in Thailand.

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